FOURTH DAY—*Tuesday 30th October 1928.*

The House re-assembled at 12 noon precisely.

Before the proceedings commenced MR. NILGIRI SANJEEVIAH brought to notice certain statements made in local and foreign papers in regard to the Bangalore disturbances and the Mysore Government. For instance he referred to certain head lines in the "Visvakarnataka," a local weekly, wherein it was stated that Messrs. Mahomed Abbas Khan and Kalami were mainly responsible for Bangalore disturbances and that Mr. B. Nagappa, the Legal Remembrancer to Government, was the chief conspirator and was responsible for bringing a bad name to the State. He also referred to the statement made by a correspondent to the newspaper called "To-day" wherein it was stated that, when the return procession of His Highness the Maharaja came near the clock tower, people cried out "shame, shame" because the Dewan was given a seat in the howdah; and that armed sepoys kept a strict guard on both sides of the street as the procession was proceeding. The speaker said that such false statements were calculated to create wrong impressions in the minds of the illiterate people and also misled the opinion about the State outside Mysore. He was of opinion that such writings should be put a stop to and the papers responsible for giving currency to such mischievous and incorrect information duly punished.

He also pointed out that the "Visvakarnataka" had another article wherein it was stated that the Mysore State officers had no back bone. This statement, he argued, was highly uncomplimentary to the officers of the State and was calculated to bring Government into contempt. He hoped that the paper would be adequately punished for publishing such articles. He also drew attention to the statement made by the same paper that certain members of the Inquiry Committee should be removed at once as if the editor was the highest authority for making such changes in the constitution of the Committee. He was of opinion that it was such mischievous local papers that were mainly responsible for the occurrences that took place in Bangalore recently.

MR. K. T. BHASYAM IYENGAR raised a point of order and said that instead of taking up the subject in the way Mr. Sanjeeviah had done, it was open to him to have brought an adjournment motion to discuss the matter threadbare. So far as he himself was concerned he would heartily agree with the opinion expressed by Mr. Sanjeeviah provided he brought the adjournment motion.

MR. B. S. LINGEGOWDA observed that the tone of the local papers had materially changed since the 30th July 1928 and that some drastic action against the erring papers was urgently called for. He said that Government should infuse some sort of fear into the minds of the editors and that their mischievous conduct should be nipped in the bud. He brought to the notice of the Dewan an article in the "Tai Nadu" paper wherein it was stated "ದಿವಾಕರವರು ತಮ್ಮ ಎದೆಯ ಮೇಲೆ ಕೈಯಿಟ್ಟುಕೊಂಡು ಹೇಳಲಿ," etc. Such writings created in the minds of the illiterate villagers a sort of disgust and disparagement against the Dewan which should not be allowed.

MR. M. C. LINGEGOWDA brought to the notice of the Dewan that copies of "Visvakarnataka" were freely distributed to the members of the Assembly the previous day with the head lines referred to by Mr. Sanjeeviah. He was of opinion that such private papers should not be allowed to be distributed in the Assembly Hall without the permission of the President. In regard to the statements made in the "To-day" paper he said that he was himself in the procession and that it was entirely false to say that any one cried out as alleged. Circulation of such false news, he said, would inevitably mislead villagers. He was sure that when he returned to his constituency, the people would ask him why Government allowed such highly questionable articles to be published in local papers without prosecuting the writers thereof.

MR. MANJAIAH was also of the opinion that the circulation of such wild rumours among the illiterate villagers would disorganise their opinion and that drastic action was called for against the erring newspapers.

MR. S. C. MALLIAH observed that it was open to the newspapers to criticise the action of Government wherever they are thought to have gone wrong. He was of opinion that latterly the local papers wrote very inflammatory articles with the ulterior motive of increasing their circulation. He added that whatever might be the character of the articles written against the Government, it was highly improper on the part of the paper to write anything against His Highness

the Maharaja. The villagers being illiterate would believe everything that was written in newspapers and such erring papers should not be allowed to reach them. He said that the Mysore people were noted for their loyalty and devotion to their Maharaja who loved his subjects very dearly. While such was the case, it was unthinkable that His Highness would allow armed sowars to accompany the procession suspecting the *bonafides* of his own subjects. While such articles were allowed to be written by papers, he failed to see what use the Press Regulation served in Mysore. He also thought that pamphlets and leaflets should not be allowed to be distributed to the members in the Assembly Hall.

MR. B. L. BYANNA was of opinion that if newspapers erred it was open to Government to take suitable action against them in the Courts of Law. If false statements were made it was also open to the Publicity Officer to contradict them. In regard to the distribution of pamphlets, etc., referred to, he thought that there was no objection to copies of registered newspapers being circulated. He did not also think that it was open to the Assembly to take notice of matters mentioned in the newspapers while the Government had the option to proceed against them under the Penal Code. He said that the matter should be referred to the Legal Remembrancer as to what action should be taken against the papers.

MR. B. S. PUTTASWAMI also repudiated the statement made in "To-day" regarding the alleged incident during the procession. He failed to see on what basis the correspondent wrote to the newspaper as he did. The cry of Hindu-Muslim tension was heard only after the incidents of the 30th July last. Similar disturbances occurred at various times in other places namely Tiptur and Chintamani; but no paper attributed such disturbances to the alleged Hindu-Muslim tension. While such was the case he failed to see why special significance should be given to the Bangalore disturbances.

In regard to the Siddick affair, he reminded the Government that at the previous session also there was a representation from Tumkur against the opinions expressed in the "Deendar" on which Government did not take any action till this day. He was at a loss to know why that matter should have suddenly cropped up since 30th July. He was of opinion that the newspapers gave currency to all sorts of wild and unfounded rumours, as, for instance, the

..turbances at Seringapatam, the murder of some school boys in Mr. Md. Abbas Khan's house, etc. He thought that all such statements were absolutely false and calculated to give an entirely wrong colour to the occurrences in Bangalore. He thought that under the present circumstances it was highly undesirable to abolish the Newspaper Regulation although on the previous occasion he himself was against the retention of the Regulation in the Statute Book.

MR. BAGAMANE DEVAGOWDA observed that lately every village got newspapers with a view to find out particulars regarding the Bangalore disturbances. He said that there was a great craving for newspaper reading and any thing written about the disturbances would be read with much avidity by villagers. He thought that the Bangalore disturbances served as a blessing in disguise to the newspapers as the publication of wild and false rumours about them increased their circulation. He said that some kind of control should be exercised over the papers so that they might not go out of bounds.

MR. B. NARASINGA RAO observed that no true citizen of Mysore would tolerate the publication of any statement against H. H. the Maharaja. The loyalty of the people of Mysore was so deep-seated that no one would tolerate any newspaper which sought to alienate the feelings of the Maharaja towards his subjects. So far as the statement made in "To-day" paper was concerned he agreed that it was quite shameful on the part of the correspondent to have written that article. He said that he also heard the rumour about armed policemen, etc., but he could not believe it. He was firmly of opinion that His Highness the Maharaja could not for a moment suspect the loyalty and devotion of his people.

MR. P. SUBBARAMACHETTY said that due punishment should be given to the editors of papers who published false and mischievous and harmful articles but that no editor should be condemned without hearing. He observed in the "Mysore Star" paper also many articles which went to create hatred among the several sections of the Hindu community. He said that such articles should not be allowed to be published in the best interests of the State.

In regard to the head lines printed in the "Visvakarnataka" to which attention was drawn by Mr. Sanjeeviah he pointed out that they were merely extracts from the evidence tendered by Mr. C. N. Narasinga Rao before the Enquiry Committee and were not the opinions of the editor

himself. He said that this fact should be borne in mind before passing sweeping remarks on the editor. He was for the freedom of the Press which should not be interfered with unless circumstances warranted it.

With reference to the last observation made by the previous speaker, MR. RAZVI said that although there should be freedom to the Press, yet there should be a limit to that freedom. The moment that the Press failed to respect the constituted authority of His Highness, the downfall of any Government was certain. He emphasised that Government should take care to see how far the freedom of the Press should go and where it should stop.

MR. D. S. MALLAPPA also pressed the view that adequate action should be taken against the paper "Today" for the statement made against His Highness the Maharaja, who was so much loved by his subjects.

MR. DODDIAH observed that all sorts of attacks were made on every officer of Government from the Dewan downwards. It was stated in papers that the Dewan had no capacity and did not know how to carry on the administration. He failed to understand how these statements could be made in the face of the fact that the Dewan and the Members of Council tried their best to afford various facilities to improve the villages, to give proper education to the villagers and to uplift the depressed classes. He said that every one in the State should be actuated by supreme ideas of loyalty, devotion and sincerity to His Highness the Maharaja and his Government. He did not believe in the false rumours circulated in regard to the murder of students, etc., in the Bangalore disturbances. He was of opinion that unless action was taken to prevent the circulation of mischievous and mean statements, the uneducated masses in the villages would lose all confidence in the Government. All that mattered for the State was that Government should go on undisturbed and that people should live a contented and peaceful life. In this view it was absolutely necessary for Government to take due notice of the conduct of the editors of papers who sought to foment hatred between caste and caste.

MR. H. C. DASAPPA said that Mysore papers gave too much prominence to disturbances at Bangalore and that nowhere else did such purely local matters attract so much attention as in Mysore. He was of opinion that mere lip-loyalty and devotion to His Highness expressed at public meetings and other places were of no use unless they were accompanied by real action. In connection with the Banga-

lore disturbances on the 30th July, he referred to a meeting convened by the local Congress Secretary on the 31st July "in memory of those that fell in the disturbances" where many speeches making false statements were made. He failed to make out what grounds there were for making all sorts of suspicious statements. He said that in some other papers he read "Why should not the Dewan be given Rs. 26 lakhs a year and made a co-Maharaja" and "Moghali Dowlat has come with Mr. Mirza," etc. He quite agreed that like other people, Government officers also committed mistakes but that it was the duty of the people to guard the reputation of the State.

He also referred to a statement made in a local paper that Mysore should have a European Dewan. He asked whether Mysoreans making such statements could really be called patriotic. He thought that at the back of all such writings there must be bickerings of a private and personal character. He was firmly of opinion that the Dewan was very popular in Mysore as was evident from the reception he received everywhere in the course of his tours in the State. He requested the editors of the papers not to agitate too much unreasonably and not to bring in and increase Hindu-Muslim hatred. He thought that much could be done by working together, for the prosperity and good name of the State particularly when the Simon Commission was sitting in British India. At such times, he said, people should not give room for internal dissensions and show to outsiders that Mysore was completely disunited.

MR. GOPALACHAR was of opinion that the papers which transgressed the law should be punished under the ordinary Penal Code. He said that freedom of the Press should be preserved intact.

MR. HUTCHAVEEREGOWDA said that during the time of Sir M. Kantaraj Urs the papers published very bad and unwholesome articles and for some time thereafter that tendency had ceased and that again during the present Dewan's administration the papers appeared to have taken up their former mischievous hobby. He prayed that some drastic action might be taken to keep the Press within bounds.

MR. L. VEMAREDDI observed that craving for newspaper reading had taken firm root in the minds of the villagers after the Bangalore disturbances and that everything published in the papers was taken as true. He was till very recently in favour of repealing the Press Act on the ground that

papers educated the masses. But from the articles which were meant to villify the Dewan and his administration which he read recently in certain papers, his opinion had completely changed and he thought that it would be wrong to abolish the Newspaper Regulation. He said that it was time that the editors were brought to their senses.

MR. H. B. GUNDAPPA observed that the newspapers in the Western countries really represented the opinion of the public and improved the condition of the countries they represented. But in Mysore the case was different. When the question of the abolition of the Press Act came up before the Assembly on a previous occasion, every body wanted that freedom of the Press should be given but no body wanted that the Press should go as it pleased without license. The writings in local papers in recent times were such as would inevitably pain the mind of His Highness the Maharaja. With reference to the statement made in "To-day" he said that it was altogether false and that if any body had cried out "shame" as alleged he could not imagine what the fate of that man would have been in the midst of citizens who loved their Maharaja as their God. He appealed to the editors not to give room for suspicion against their *bona fides* but to give only correct information without misleading the public.

MR. B. LINGE GOWDA also repudiated the statement made in the "To-day" paper. He said that the delinquent newspapers should be suppressed if the good name and prestige of the State should be maintained. He said that certain articles which were very mean and false were published in Mysore papers edited by the Grand Old Man of Mysore and that they spoilt the minds of especially the villagers. He stated that this editor whose opinions carried some weight should have verified the facts before giving currency to false and alarming news.

THE DEWAN warned the speaker against making personal attacks. He hoped that the editor would be more careful in future.

MR. MAHOMED SAIT said that persons who gave incorrect and false statements about the procession and against His Highness the Maharaja should not be allowed to take their seats in the Assembly.

MR. K. T. BHASHYAM said that the article published in "To-day" paper was entirely false. He urged that a resolution on behalf of the House should be recorded expressing full confidence in the Dewan and unfailing

loyalty and devotion to His Highness the Maharaja and that it should be conveyed to His Highness.

MR. HOSAKOPPA KRISHNA RAO observed that no section of the people in the State would be so mean as to cast any slur on His Highness the Maharaja. He said that it was unbelievable that any one could have cried "shame" near the Clock Tower as alleged in the "To-day" newspaper.

So far as the Bangalore disturbances were concerned he said that the members of the House need not have made any statements as that was not the occasion for discussing the subject. He said that there was a separate committee appointed to enquire into the matter and the whole evidence was before them for scrutiny. In this view he thought that it was not at all necessary to give credence to any of the writings in the papers appearing on the evidence before the Committee.

So far as the freedom of the Press was concerned, he said that he was entirely in favour of it. He failed to see why the local papers should not publish articles commenting on the details of the evidence before the Enquiry Committee. Foreign papers were writing articles about the Bangalore disturbances in a much stronger tone. He was of opinion that if any editor was found guilty, suitable action might be taken only after giving him an opportunity to explain his action. He further stated that the full report of the Enquiry Committee should be placed before the Assembly and its advice taken as to what further action should be taken.

With reference to the articles about the Legal Remembrancer, he thought that they were the outcome of the apparent partiality that he exhibited towards one section or another connected with the disturbances.

He was firmly of opinion that no one would agree to the appointment of a foreign Dewan in Mysore.

MR. RAMDOSS also was of opinion that newspapers alone were mainly responsible for the disturbances at Bangalore. It was they that influenced most of the students to strike and it was they that circulated perverted views for the information of the villagers. He was of opinion that the Press Regulation should not be repealed but, on the other hand, should be applied more rigorously to prevent the papers from transgressing the limits of decency.

MR. BHAVIKATTE CHANNABASAPPA said that newspapers were of late publishing all sorts of rumours *viz.*, "His Highness the Maharaja was invited by his Excellency

the Viceroy for consultation at Simla" and "Mysore would shortly be annexed to the British Territory," etc. He said that the villagers would almost believe such things unless educated persons guided them in the right way. Besides, such rumours would affect the good reputation of the State. He therefore requested that Government should take proper steps against the papers which gave currency to unfounded rumours.

MR. B. P. BASAPPA SETTY was of opinion that the local papers did not know the standard of Journalism and did not also know what to write and what not. While agreeing that there must be complete freedom of the Press, he thought that drastic action should be taken against the papers which transgressed the bounds of decency.

MR. NABI KHAN also expressed the same opinion.

MR. PATTABHIRAMA SETTY said that whatever the papers might say against His Highness the Maharaja or his Government they could do no harm to any one. He was sure that His Highness's fame had spread throughout India and even outside and that the indecent articles written in the papers would betray the littleness of the editors themselves. He said he was for freedom of the Press as the papers were meant to educate the masses in general. But he was of opinion that only such persons as wrote healthy articles should be given license.

MR. VENKATAKRISHNIAH quite agreed with Mr. Sanjeeviah in the statement that every one in the State should be perfectly loyal to His Highness the Maharaja. As some reference was made to the writings in the "Mysore Patriot" he wished to say something about the matter on this occasion. The object of the paper was to give expression to the public opinion. A reference to the editorial paragraphs would show that the paper did not for a moment swerve from that policy. It would also be apparent if the issues of his paper for the past 60 years were perused that the "Mysore Patriot" was guided by one motive namely to be loyal to His Highness the Maharaja of Mysore and to allow nothing to go between the people and that loyalty. It was however necessary, he said, sometimes to allow individual opinions of some correspondents to be published. But even there, a strict watch was generally exercised. If any change in the tone of the paper was at all observed, it was due to the present changed conditions. The public opinion itself had changed for the past 2 months consequent on the incidents that had recently taken place at Bangalore.

As Mysore was somewhat remote from Bangalore it sometimes happened that wrong information was furnished to the paper and published therein. If the information was wrong there was the Publicity Officer to Government who could easily set it right. A charge was levelled against the "Mysore Patriot" that it favoured the appointment of a European Dewan to the State. He emphatically denied that it was the opinion of the editor at all. It was the opinion of a correspondent from Bombay which was sent for publication and it was published. So also in regard to making the Dewan a co-Maharaja, the "Mysore Patriot" was not responsible. A newspaper could not always disallow certain emphatic opinions received from responsible correspondents and they would be published in the paper for the readers to consider them on their merits. His own opinion, however, was that Mysore would be better ruled by a Dewan born and bred up within the State itself and that no foreign Dewan would be a blessing to the State. He did not think that there was any paper which would not reflect the public opinion whether within the State or outside in regard to any matter relating to the State. So far as he was personally concerned he knew the present Dewan from his very infancy and he had nothing to say against him.

In regard to the application of Press Act to the "Mysore Patriot" he said that there was not a more cosmopolitan paper than the "Mysore Patriot." He was only sorry that meanings not warranted by the context had been attached to the statements made in that paper. In regard to the Press Act itself he reminded the House of what a British Viceroy once said that there was no more stringent weapon than the Mysore Press Act and yet the newspapers in Mysore were still going on without any impediment. That would show that the Mysore papers were loyal to the core and no fault could be found against them in regard to that sentiment.

MR. CHENNAMARE GOWDA said that the Mysore villagers were deeply loyal and their children worshipped His Highness the Maharaja every day. He was of opinion that on account of the wrong notions created by the newspapers the villagers were beginning to lose confidence in the Government and that these papers were paving the way for the boys to go astray. He was of opinion that such things should be stopped at once by the Government if the State should enjoy peace.

MR. RANOJI RAO fully agreed with the views of Mr. Bhashyam Iyengar and hoped that after the establishment of

Hindu Mahajana Sabha on the 28th, the tone of the newspers as well as any seeming hatred between sections of the people would for ever disappear from the State.

MR. YELANDUR SRINIVASA IYENGAR observed that at the first opening of the Representative Assembly, His Highness the late Maharaja ordered that every officer should go to every village and mix freely with every villager. This order was not generally carried into effect and it was the newspapers that brought them to their senses. Nowadays, newspapers were very popular and without them very little information about the outside world was available to the people of Mysore. If newspapers gave also false impressions, it was open to their readers to accept what was good and reject what was against their taste. If any particular paper erred in a serious manner it was open to Government to call upon the editor to explain his conduct and thereafter take needful action against him if his explanation should be unsatisfactory. In these circumstances he did not think that the abolition of the Press Act should be delayed.

MR. BANUMIAH was of opinion that the newspapers should not be permitted to wound the feelings of His Highness the Maharaja in any particular.

MR. NANJANGUD PAPANNA thought that the Press Act should not be abolished and that every attempt should be made to control the newspapers under the provisions of that Act. He did not think that it was necessary to invoke the aid of any other law so long as the Newspaper Act operated.

MR. SUBBANNA NAIK of Koppa said that vernacular papers were freely read in the villages with the result that the villagers imbibing the ideas expressed in such papers, were suspecting the *bona fides* of Government in spite of the contradictions made by the Publicity Department. He believed that it was the newspapers that guided the opinions in the villages. The reason was that the country having made much progress in education the people considered that the opinions circulated by the newspapers were correct. When an old man like Mr. Venkatakrishniah who had made a name in Mysore for patriotism wrote such stuff as was referred to by the previous speakers, it was no wonder that other vernacular papers also wrote in a more pernicious way. He therefore thought that the Press Act should remain in the country sometime longer until the newspapers knew their duties better. He requested the newspaper editors to be careful about giving expression to statements of opinions which would lead the uneducated people in the villages astray.